



POSITION: Research Director

LOCATION: Toronto, Ontario

REPORTS TO: Managing Director

ORGANIZATION WEBSITE: www.samaracanada.com

DATE: March 15th 2017

DEADLINE: April 24th 2017

THE ORGANIZATION

Samara Canada is dedicated to strengthening Canada’s democracy by reconnecting citizens to politics. Since its founding in 2007, Samara has become a trusted, non-partisan champion of increased civic engagement and a more positive public life.

At the core of how Samara advances its mission is research—research that shines new light on Canada’s democratic system and encourages greater political participation across the country. We write accessible, engaging and often-cited reports; hold public events and digital engagement opportunities; and speak to media, decision makers and non-profits leaders. We also put our research to work by giving teachers and professors the tools to encourage democratic engagement.

Samara maintains an active website and has an extensive social media presence. More information on Samara’s activities and biographies staff are available at www.samaracanada.com. Follow us on Twitter at @samaracda.

THE POSITION

The Research Director position is full-time and based in Samara’s office in Toronto.

The Research Director, with the Managing Director and Executive Director, will be responsible for setting and executing a vigorous research agenda that helps to advance changes to parliamentary institutions, political culture and citizen participation. This role will be pivotal in shaping and carrying out Samara’s research.

Samara’s existing research has been used to frame a public conversation by illuminating problems with Canada’s democratic system, as well as presenting and discussing recommendations that address them.

Two flagship research initiatives have evolved at Samara, the MP Exit Interview Project and the Democracy 360: A Report Card on How Canadians Communicate, Participate and Lead in Politics. All of Samara's research is publicly available on our website, and has received extensive coverage in the media, been cited in parliamentary debates and appeared on university curricula across the country.

Samara's research should be designed and executed with attention to improving Canadian politics. Priority areas include:

- How political leaders are recruited, trained and exercise influence within the parliamentary system;
- How Canadians perceive political institutions and political leaders;
- How Canadians' inclusion and participation in politics is facilitated and encouraged.

The ideal candidate will:

- have a deep knowledge of Canadian politics;
- be open-minded to new and different opportunities to improve the way the political system currently functions;
- have a track record of delivering research projects with public impact;
- have familiarity with sound research design and techniques;
- be comfortable working with quantitative analyses (an asset);
- be extremely organized and have experience overseeing staff and coordinating major projects;
- have experience with contracts and contractors (data analysts, writers, survey providers);
- have experience creating and working through collaborative partnerships;
- be an excellent communicator, both in writing and verbally; and
- be an inspired, and inspiring, advocate for change.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a member of the senior leadership, and working with the Samara staff, external advisory boards, and contractors the successful candidate will have responsibility in four major areas.

1. Building upon Samara's previous work, you will set the direction for a vigorous research agenda:
 - Develop a 3-year working plan that will incorporate the release of ongoing research and develop new research initiatives;
 - Working with the Executive Director and Managing Director, set and maintain a yearly research budget;
 - Craft consultation plans, consult with stakeholders, set timelines and schedules, undertake necessary background research; and
 - Develop partnerships to achieve added impact for the research agenda, if necessary.
2. Oversee research projects from conception to release:
 - Plan and execute research projects that may include a mix of primary and secondary research, as appropriate;
 - Oversee staff, contractors, advisors and volunteers for data collection and analysis;
 - Work with communications staff to ensure research releases are accurate, compelling and fulfill Samara's intended impact; and
 - Support tracking and evaluation of outcomes against research plan.

3. Support strategic engagement with key stakeholders and maintain Samara's nonpartisan reputation
 - Mapping Samara's research stakeholders and maintaining contact details in Samara's database;
 - Monitoring key developments in Canadian politics, and advise/prepare for windows of influence (e.g. Appearance at committee, drafting op-eds);
 - Help generate event ideas that ensure Samara's research is taken up;
 - Speak to relevant audiences and the media about Samara's research; and
 - Ensure that Samara's data are used accurately by external bodies.
4. Support Samara's organizational capacity
 - Where appropriate, assist with reports to Samara's governance board and funders;
 - Attend events hosted by Samara or relevant events Samara is invited to; and
 - Offer creative ideas on how to build a stronger community of interest and financial support around Samara.

CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

- Extensive understanding of Canadian politics and history, holding a graduate degree in a relevant field
- Extensive experience working with senior level politicians or business people
- Capability to contribute to and lead rigorous research projects
- Ability to work creatively within a relatively limited budget
- Proven ability to translate research and conceptual work into meaningful and engaging products and activities that are accessible for the public
- Exceptional organizational skills
- Experience working in or on politics is an asset
- An ability to work and communicate in both English and French is strongly preferred

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

You:

- Know how to inspire a team and colleagues and bring out the best in others.
- Love schedules. You can see how writing down a plan helps others to do their best.
- Care a lot about getting things exactly right.
- Like people and want them to care about politics. You are always thinking about how others think, read and experience the world. You know that cynicism and contempt are not going to get us out of a democratic deficit.
- Have started something from scratch and can move a long-term project forward.
- Are unfazed when something goes wrong and think first about options for how to solve the problem before you bring the problem to others.

COMPENSATION

Salary will be commensurate with experience.

HOW TO APPLY

Samara is committed to the principle of equity in employment and encourages applications from all qualified people from any background.

Applications must include a resume and a cover letter. This cover letter should include your reflections on Samara's existing body of research, and your initial thoughts about how you would evolve Samara's research for greater impact as the Research Director.

Please send your materials by e-mail to Erica Chan, Executive Assistant (erica.chan@samaracanada.com).